



CATALYST

FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT



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RURAL AMERICA, ITS PEOPLE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

As a farmer who lives near one town with a population of 1,606, another with a population of 516, and a third with a population of 350, I know what rural America is. Rural America is a place where you can walk in the evening and hear the crickets and the frogs. But it is also a place where 63 percent of the housing still lacks complete plumbing, where an average family income is 23 percent less than in metropolitan areas. The challenge in rural development is simply to make rural America a better place to live and a better place to work.

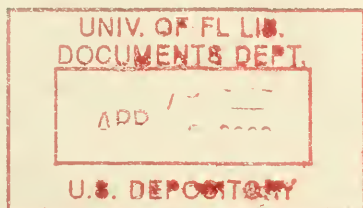
Rural development is, of course, economic development where we strive for more jobs and a prosperous agriculture. It is also developing community facilities such as transportation, utilities, sewer and water system, and recreation, and land use planning. With all of these there is people building through programs of education and health, and volunteer leadership in reaching out to less privileged people.

It is most important to remember that successful rural development requires a balanced comprehensive approach simultaneously involving economic development, people building, community facility improvement and environmental quality. Deficiency in any of these areas will be the limiting factor in a community's fulfillment.

When you look at the size of the task ahead of us and the already overstrained Federal budget, it is clear that to achieve our goals, we are going to have to encourage more citizen participation in volunteer movements to meet the needs of rural America.

In all of the rural communities that I have known, the people who live there want to decide the direction of their future. The rural citizen's basic desire to serve, coupled with his vision of the destiny of his own community, provide opportunity and challenge for leadership for all of us who are dedicated to the development of rural America.

Working with all of you toward our common goal of enriching quality of life in rural America is an opportunity which I look forward to with great enthusiasm.



William Erwin
WILLIAM ERWIN
Deputy Under Secretary
for Rural Development

HOPE SPRINGS FROM DESPAIR
AS HOUSING BOOMS IN TULIA, TEXAS

Business in Tulia, Texas, slowly withered away. In the downtown section, 25 commercial and business buildings stood abandoned and shuttered.

"Sunset Addition," a dilapidated slum occupied mostly by Negro families, blighted an entire section on the "wrong side" of the tracks.

Services from the town languished as the tax base dwindled and community activity retreated to the most basic and necessary functions.

Finally, the problems of the town became too large to ignore. Local leaders realized that if their town was to prosper, or perhaps even continue to exist, they would have to act decisively.

They conferred with housing specialists of the Farmers Home Administration who found Sunset Addition beyond hope of rehabilitation. In exploring alternate solutions, the town leaders learned that Farmers Home could make new home loans to low-income families if suitable building sites were available.

Government leaders, civic organizations, and private citizens soon agreed that FHA financed homes could be built on any suitable site in town. Within months, the first housing construction started, and the families of Sunset Addition began moving into Tulia. Spanish surname and white families soon followed and applied for similar housing loans. The Tulia housing boom developed.

Within two years, the Tulia office of the Farmers Home Administration approved 286 housing loans for a total of \$3.5 million dollars. All homes are individually built, many with brick veneer. Most of them have three bedrooms, but some for larger families have four bedrooms, and others for senior citizens have two bedrooms. Builders have kept the average construction cost at about \$13,500.

As families move from dilapidated shacks to new homes, the old houses are demolished, either voluntarily by owners, or by official city council condemnation. The cleared ground is used for new building sites.

Vacant and unsightly areas of the town are steadily being upgraded, improved, and beautified through construction of new homes. Homes financed by Farmers Home compare favorably with more expensive, conventional housing as they stand side-by-side throughout the town.

The influx of construction money, plus new tax revenues have spurred business activities in the town and employment is up.

POPULATION TURNAROUND

The flow of people out of the rural South during the 1950's slowed to a trickle the next decade. Four million more people left the area than moved in between 1950 and 1960, but during 1960-70 out-migration dropped 60 percent to 1.5 million and the South's total population actually grew nearly 6 percent. Total outmigration from the rest of rural America did not slow as much. The population turnaround in the rural South is spotlighted in the April Farm Index. A limited number of single copies of this monthly U.S. Department of Agriculture publication is available by writing the Editor, Farm Index, OMS Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

STAND TALL--AND PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS

Driver education, seemingly a trivial segment of adult training, is a vital part of the new community development program sponsored by the South Carolina rural electric system.

Urban employers balk at hiring rural workers unless they can drive. When a carpool has only one driver and he is away for any reason, they lose at least four workers that day.

Attention to such details as driver education is one of the reasons Stand Tall is succeeding in community development in South Carolina. It is one of the reasons the Rural Electrification Administration is urging its borrowers nationwide to adapt such a program to their communities.

No item which will upgrade rural life is neglected in the Stand Tall program, initiated about 18 months ago by the South Carolina Electric Co-operative Association, Inc. Furthermore, the poor are involved in each community's program from its inception.

As a community forms a Stand Tall commission, nothing is left to chance. From the start, the local group receives assistance from the Statewide Stand Tall organization--step by step guidelines, suggestions for meeting agendas, forms on which to report progress, survey forms, and other guidance. A fulltime development specialist from the local electric co-op acts as the commission chairman's assistant.

The cooperatives make surveys, help establish nonprofit industrial development corporations and handle other special problems for the community.

One of the great stumbling blocks of community development, duplication of effort, is minimized by outlining each commission project in advance. Another important detail.

Stand Tall's aim is any State's aim: to make the State's rural areas attractive industrial bases, offering not only water and sewage treatment but better education, housing, medical centers, better roads, job training, recreation and an improved environment.

Worthy goals in any State, yes, but Stand Tall has gone beyond the talking stage. Detail by detail, they are developing their communities.

As of February 1972, 15 rural electric cooperatives were involved in this program as sponsors of 16 Stand Tall Commission organizations. For further information, contact Robert D. Bennett, Ex. Vice Pres., or Al Ballard, Director of Industrial and Community Development, South Carolina Electric Cooperative Association, Inc., 808 Knox Abbott Drive, Cayce, South Carolina 29033. REA offers a colorful booklet on the program, ACTION NOW--TOTAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THRU CO-OP LEADERSHIP.

WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING FOR COUNTY FAIRS?

Housing exhibits for county fairs were put together by a multi-agency team in Pennsylvania last year. Table-size scale models of homes designed by the Forest Service were accompanied by technical information provided by the Extension Service and Farmers Home Administration. Considerable public interest brought many inquiries for literature and detailed house plans. For details, see a local Forest Service official or write The Northeastern Office of the Forest Service at 6816 Market St., Upper Darby, Pennsylvania.



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FARMERS MARKETS SPREAD IN NEW MEXICO

Thanks to the League of Women Voters in Los Alamos, N.M. the farmers of small acreages began to increase their income in 1970 by selling fresh vegetables at a local farmers market.

Members of the League, noticing farmers were selling vegetables beside the road and from door-to-door, located a parking lot for their use each Thursday and promoted the new Los Alamos Farmers Market. The Extension Service and other USDA agencies helped the farmers with problems such as better vegetable varieties, irrigation and insect and disease control. 38 farmers participated the first year, more the next.

In 1971, the League of Women Voters in Santa Fe sponsored a new Farmers Market for that city, and this year a group called the Friends of Taos Valley will sponsor a Farmers Market in Taos, N.M.

SLIDE PRESENTATION AIDS ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP

Environmental Thrust is the subject of a new full color, 50-frame slide set and filmstrip released by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

It was prepared to help inform the public about the resources available through the national network of USDA offices to help challenge pollution, ugliness and blight, discussing subjects such as soil and water pollution control, housing, waste disposal, and cost-sharing programs for planting trees and shrubs. A cassette carrying music and dialogue helps tell the story in an informal treatment.

The filmstrip can be ordered for \$5.50 from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. Order the slide set for \$13.00 from Photography Division, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. The cassette is available from either source for \$3.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT MOVIE AVAILABLE

A 26 1/2-minute color movie on rural development has been completed by the Cooperative Extension Service of New Mexico State University and the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Narrated by Chet Huntley, "What Do You Want" is designed to help people decide what kind of development they want in their community. It may be purchased for \$245 from Bandelier Films, 2001 Gold S.E., Albuquerque, N.M.